

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7162

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, IT

SUBJECT: UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI TRAVELLING TO THE US

REF: ROME 4946

1. SUMMARY: UIL SECRETARY GENERAL VANNI IS TRAVELING TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON DURING THE PERIOD MAY 20-24. HE WILL BE SEEKING AFL-CIO SUPPORT AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF AN INCREASING POSSIBILITY OF A SPLIT WITHIN THE UIL. VANNI'S TRIP SHOULD BE TREATED WITH THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BOILING LABOR SITUATION, UIL SECRETARY GENERAL RAFFAELE VANNI IS TRAVELING TO NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON ON MAY 20 TO CONSULT PRIMARILY WITH OFFICIALS OF THE AFL-CIO. PRESENT PLANS CALL FOR HIM TO RETURN TO ITALY ON MAY 24. CLEARLY, VANNI SEEKS TO LINE UP AS MUCH SUPPORT AS POSSIBLE FOR HIS POSITION, PARTICULARLY AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY -- WHICH IS INCREASINGLY BEING TREATED AS A PROBABILITY -- THAT MOMENTOUS CHANGES ARE IN THE OFFING IN BOTH UIL AND CISL.

3. THE SOCIALIST PLURALITY IN UIL, WHOSE NUMBERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN ERODED BY THE SEMI-DEFECTION OF THE SIMONCINI-TORDA WING, HAS CALLED FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF UIL TO RESOLVE THE LABOR UNITY ISSUE. THIS WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE UIL

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CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN JUNE. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS TO HAVE

MET ON MAY 12, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THE SOCIALISTS STAYED AWAY, THUS PREVENTING THE PRESENCE OF A QUORUM. (A 60 PERCENT VOTE IS REQUIRED FOR BINDING POLICY, BUT TWO-THIRDS MUST BE PRESENT FOR A QUORUM. THE ADDITION OF THE SIMONCINI SOCIALISTS GIVES VANNI 60 PERCENT, BUT LESS THAN 67 PERCENT).

4. THE UIL SOCIALISTS STRONGLY SUPPORT THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ORGANIC MERGER OF THE THREE LABOR CONFERATIONS AND, THEREFORE, ARE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF VANNI'S RECENT MOVES WHICH HAVE, IN EFFECT, HALTED THE UNITY TREND. THE SOCIALIST GROUP HAS ALSO GONE OVER VANNI'S HEAD DIRECTLY TO THE FEDERATION CGIL-CISL-UIL (CCU), ASKING THE CCU TO ABOLISH VOTING BY CONFERENCE (THUS FREEING THE SOCIALISTS TO CAST THEIR VOTES WITH LABOR UNITY ADVOCATES), AND TO FIX A TIMETABLE FOR ORGANIC MERGER.

5. IN SHORT, THE POSSIBILITY OF A MAJOR BREACH IN UIL IS REAL, AND IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT VANNI WILL BE SEEKING SUPPORT IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON.

6. VANNI HAS ASKED THAT EUR/LAB ASSIST IN FACILITATING HIS PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON. HE REQUESTS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEPT. OF THE AFL-CIO BE ALERTED TO HIS COMING AND BE FURNISHED APPROPRIATE BACKGROUND ON THE OBJECTIVES OF HIS VISIT. VANNI'S OFFICE IS MAKING A PARALLEL APPROACH TO THE AFL-CIO THROUGH THE PARIS OFFICE OF IRVING BROWN.

7. COMMENT: VANNI MUST CONSTANTLY MAINTAIN THE MOST DELICATE BALANCE IN SEEKING TO HALT THE PACE TOWARD LABOR MERGER. HIS MOVES MUST CONSTANTLY BE ACCOMPANIED BY PROTESTATIONS OF FIDELITY TOWARD THE UNITY CONCEPT, EMPHASIZING ONLY THAT THE PROPER PRECONDITIONS ARE NOT AT HAND. OTHERWISE, HE WOULD SOON FIND HIS SUPPORT ERODING AMONG IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF BOTH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND HIS OWN REPUBLICAN FACTIONS. ONE HOPES THAT THE AFL-CIO WILL TAKE SYMPATHETIC ACCOUNT OF THESE FACTS OF LIFE IN DEALING WITH VANNI. VOLPE

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